

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

5-11-2001

A case study: new teacher induction

Keith B. Patterson
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons](#)

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you -
share your thoughts on our feedback form.**

Recommended Citation

Patterson, Keith B., "A case study: new teacher induction" (2001). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1594.
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/1594>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact LibraryTheses@rowan.edu.

A Case Study: New Teacher Induction

By
Keith B. Patterson

A Master's Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the
Master of Arts Degree in The Graduate School of
Rowan University
April 10, 2001

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved: May 11, 2001

Abstract

Keith Patterson

A Case Study: New Teacher Induction Into The
Science Department At Pennsauken High School
2001

Dr. Sernak
School Administration

The purpose of this study was to determine in what areas new teachers were deficient using a case study action research approach. The study will result in recommendations to the administration of Pennsauken Public Schools for a redesign of the new teacher-training academy and for the development of a mentor-training academy. Nine new teachers ranging in one to four years of experience were studied using a variety of instruments designed to answer three research questions. (1) What training do new teachers need in classroom management techniques? (2) What training do new teachers need in lesson planning and instructional strategies? (3) What training do new teachers need in safety? Three data sources were collected for each research question including teacher interviews, studies of past teacher observations, archival evidence on discipline referrals and teacher handouts, lesson plans, safety tests, and teacher observation. The data showed that new teachers are in need of more training in the area of classroom management and structuring their lessons. Two courses were proposed that teachers would take during their first years of teaching. The first would be on classroom management and the second would be on lesson design and instructional strategies.

Mini-Abstract

Keith Patterson

A Case Study: New Teacher Induction Into The
Science Department At Pennsauken High School
2001

Dr. Sernak
School Administration

The purpose of this study was to determine in what areas new teachers were deficient using a case study approach. New teachers were found deficient in classroom management skills and in lesson design. It will be recommended that courses be developed for new teachers that concentrate on these areas.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge the contributions of Mr. Peter Woodcock, Pennsauken High School Science Department Chairperson and Ms. Tracey Wojdon, Pennsauken High School Science Teacher for their help in collecting and sifting through the data for this study. The author would also like to thank Mrs. Eileen Egan, Howard Phifer Middle School Science Department Head; Ms. Solvieg Jakobsen, Phifer Middle School Science Teacher; Mr. Tim Gilbride, Phifer Middle School Science Teacher; and Mrs. Debbie Droke, Phifer Middle School Math Teacher for providing unique insights and nonbiased opinions concerning the data collected. I would also like to thank Mr. Tom Lombardo who has worked with me on many projects during this program and who has helped me on many occasions. Mrs. Diana Patterson, Ann Mullen Middle School Math Teacher is also acknowledged for lending her great support and acting as proofreader, advisor, sounding board, and example of courage. This study was completed in conjunction with a Goals 2000: Local Enhancement Grant award through the New Jersey Department of Education. The views and conclusions in this paper do not necessarily reflect those of the administration of Pennsauken Public Schools.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Keith B. Patterson, K-12 District Science Supervisor, Pennsauken Public Schools, 800 Hylton Road, Pennsauken, New Jersey 08110. Electronic mail may be sent via Internet to kpatterson@pennsauken.net.

Table of Contents

| | Page |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Acknowledgements | 4 |
| Chapter 1 Introduction | 6 |
| Setting of the Study | 7 |
| Significance of the Study | 13 |
| Chapter 2 Review of the Literature | 14 |
| Chapter 3 Design of the Study | 20 |
| Chapter 4 Presentation of the Research Findings | 27 |
| Chapter 5 Conclusions, Implications and Further Study | 33 |
| References | 36 |
| Appendix A Data Gathered/Instrumentation | 35 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Unofficial Organizational Chart of Pennsauken Public Schools | 10 |
| Table 3.1: Research Questions and Their Data Sources. | 22 |
| Table 3.2: Data Sifting Matrix | 26 |

Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

This results of this study will help to determine what types of programs should be included in a mentor teacher training course at Pennsauken High School and the other schools in the Pennsauken Public Schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine in what areas new teachers are deficient using a case study action research approach. The study will result in recommendations to the administration of Pennsauken Public Schools for a redesign of the new teacher training academy and for the development of a mentor training academy.

Definitions

alternate route teacher candidate – a program available through the New Jersey Department of Education where individuals can seek to obtain a teacher certification without going through a teacher education degree program.

master teacher – A teacher who is identified as being a model for other teachers to aspire to.

mentoring -- a process where a newer teacher is paired with an experienced teacher who guides the new teacher through his or her first year(s) of teaching and provides that teacher with support and assistance.

snapshots – a data gathering technique where an observer quickly visits a location at a random time, gathers data, and then quickly moves to the next location.

Limitations

A case study approach of nine teachers was utilized which lasted less than one school year. This limited the effectiveness of the findings because of the small population being studied and because of the short amount of time devoted to the study. The intern conducted the study working with teachers whom he supervises. This could have lead to subject bias since the teachers' behavior may have resulted in part because their direct supervisor was studying them. The intern is new to his role as science supervisor and does not have much experience with any kind of staff development.

Setting of the Study

The Pennsauken Public School District is located in the Township of Pennsauken, New Jersey. It contains one sending school district, which is Merchantville Schools, and has eight private schools within its borders. There are many factors that distinguish Pennsauken Public Schools from other districts such as the politics, the teachers, the students, the changing community, the socioeconomic status, the history of the sending district, and the organizational structure of the district.

A Changing Community

Pennsauken is a community located between one of the richest school districts: Cherry Hill, New Jersey and one of the poorest school districts: Camden, New Jersey. Pennsauken's population and socioeconomic status is in a state of flux. The minority population of the school district is increasing as white families move to other communities and poorer minority families move in. This is a great concern to the school board that has tried to take steps to prevent further change. They have placed billboards up and have instituted many advanced courses in the high school to try to prevent the loss

of the wealthier white population. Some of these courses run with as few as five students, illustrating the Board's commitment to offer them. At the same time, they have tried to increase the number of minority teachers and administrators in the district by targeting job fairs at traditionally high minority schools. This effort was not too successful this year. Only five of the thirty new teachers at the new teacher academy were minorities and none of the four administrators hired this year were minorities. Only one school board member is a minority.

The Sending District

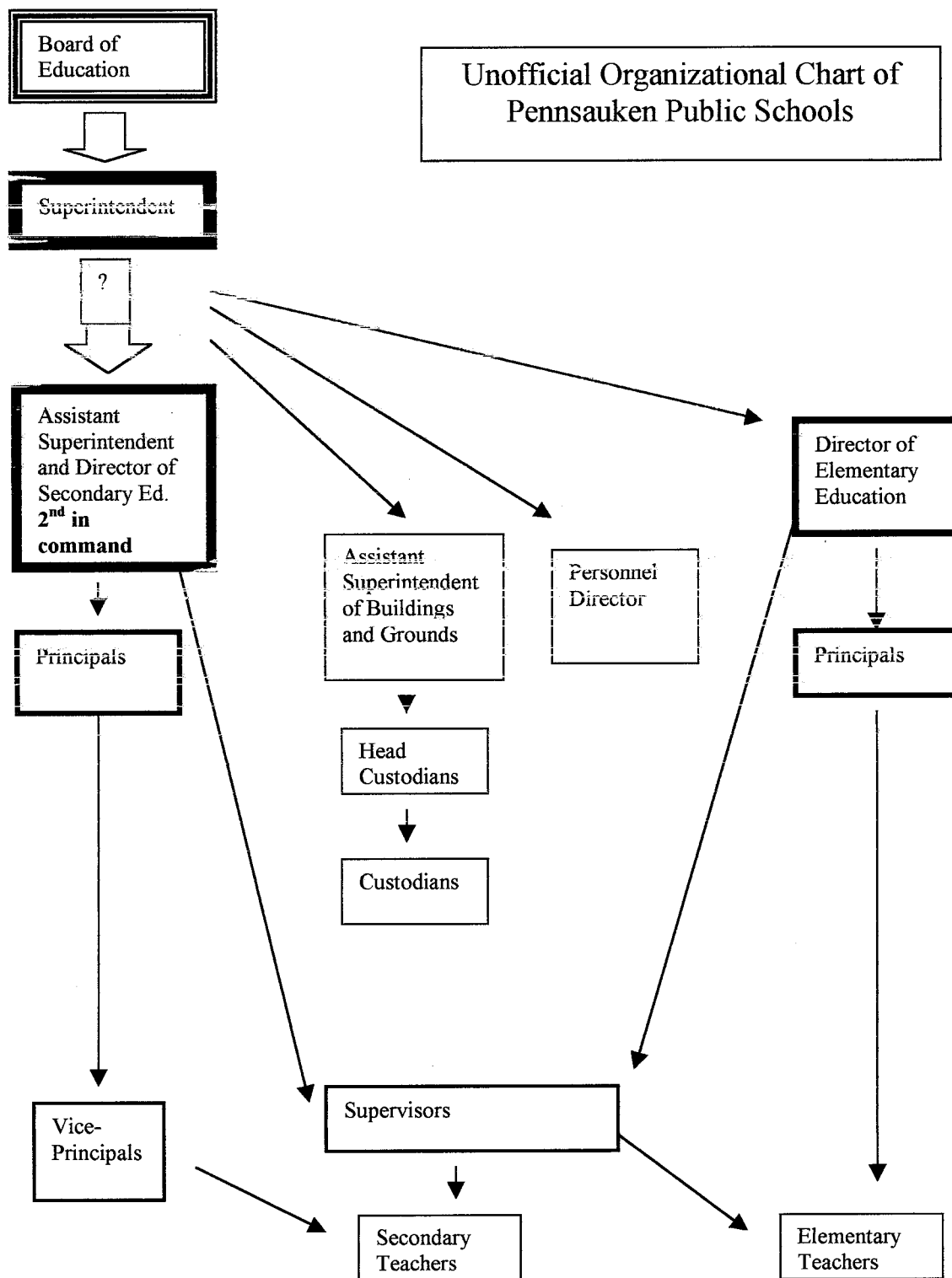
Merchantville Public Schools and Pennsauken Public Schools have shared a long history of cooperation. Merchantville is almost surrounded by Pennsauken. When Pennsauken was a more rural community, it was a sending district to Merchantville High School. Now that the communities have switched roles, Merchantville sends its students to Pennsauken High School. The old Merchantville High School serves as the Merchantville Elementary School now. This school houses Kindergarten through eighth grade. The changing community in Pennsauken has caused some concern in Merchantville which was a wealthy town in its past. Merchantville has tried several times to send its students to other communities like Haddonfield and Cherry Hill. This has placed a strain in the relations between the communities. This has also lead to initiatives by the school district to appease the Merchantville residents. The school district now has three full time investigators who make sure that only Pennsauken and Merchantville residents are attending Pennsauken schools. Many Camden families try to send their kids to Pennsauken Schools since they live very close to those schools. In

many cases, neighbors send their kids to different schools because of township lines. Bus drivers, counselors and teachers are told to turn in anyone who may live in another school district. This has lead some families to send their children to live with relatives in Pennsauken so that their children can attended Pennsauken schools.

The Administrative Structure

The district's administrative structure is quite chaotic now due to several factors including the recent departure of the superintendent and his conflict with the school board. If an organizational chart of the district is in existence, no one knows where it is. There are also no job descriptions, vision statements or district goals that have been located. This chart on the next page describes the administrative structure of the district as best, as the intern has been able to determine through interviews with the administrators.

The greatest amount of confusion arises in the roles of the district supervisors. When the departing superintendent arrived eight years ago, he brought with him a group



of his own people. He created K-12 supervisor positions for these people. He placed them above the role of principals and vice-principals to a great degree. His monthly superintendent advisory meetings included all of the supervisors, yet included only half of the principals and did not include any of the vice-principals. At this point, the supervisors were directly responsible to the superintendent to a great degree. They could circumvent every other administrator in the district by going directly to the superintendent for permission or the necessary signatures. The supervisors also planned the new buildings and additions that are presently being added to the district. The plans were not even shown to the principals of those buildings or to the assistant superintendent until they were finalized and the decision was made by the Board of Education for the superintendent to leave. The intern was there during the meeting when the plans were shown to them for the first time only weeks before construction began. Since the decision for the superintendent to leave was made, two of the four supervisors have also left and one more is thinking seriously about leaving due to the change in their condition without the superintendent. It is the experience of the intern that the new supervisors taking their places have much less power and influence and it has created a vacuum and contention in the district because everyone is unsure of their new roles.

The Building Program

A very large building program is currently underway in the district due to the rise in young families moving into the district. The current nine elementary schools, the middle school and the high school are over populated. The new program allows for two large new elementary schools to replace two smaller ones; two large additions to be

added to the high school; and a large fifth and sixth grade intermediate building to be added on the site of the present sixth, seventh and eighth grade middle school. Although these buildings are set to open next year, very little has been done to facilitate their opening. A small group of administrators has been selected to design the programs for these new schools. They have not asked the supervisors or the teachers for input nor have they shown the plans to anyone at this point. There is much speculation in the district about how the buildings will run. The fifth grade teachers are especially anxious since rumors report that the students in the new building will switch classes like the middle school.

The Teachers

The teachers are engaged in a contract negotiation with the school district at this time. Although there is no history of a strike in Pennsauken, the teachers' union believes that one might be appropriate for this negotiation. The conflict is not centered on salary and benefits like so many are. It centers on other issues like extension of the school day, prep periods, and the number of teaching periods. Many of the teachers in the high school are very dissatisfied with their situation. The teachers in the other buildings also have concerns. These concerns and this dissatisfaction are the real subject of the strike talks.

The teachers' attendance rates beat the state average. Their salary is just below the state median. In fact, judging by the school report card the Pennsauken Faculty is about as average as you can get. The salary ranges from \$36,000 to \$70,000. Teachers receive two courses a year at the Rowan University rate. The district gives a medical plan that

includes medical, dental and prescription plans. In the past 5 years, nearly a third of the faculty has been replaced in the district due to retirements; attrition and the expanding population of school aged children. There is an unusually big gulf in experience between the older teachers and the new teachers. For instance in the science department three of the sixteen teachers have over 25 years of experience and the rest of the department has eight years or less including 5 non-tenured teachers. This has caused some conflict.

Significance of the Study

New building programs mean new teachers. The Pennsauken Public Schools have already hired over 100 new teachers or 16% of their teaching force in the last three years. These next two years will see another hiring boom, which could mean 50 teachers a year in new positions alone. All of these new teachers will need direction and that could be given to them through a properly trained mentor within a well-conceived mentor program. Pennsauken is at a crucial time in its history where mentor teachers are desperately needed to retain the richness of the district's heritage and promote the reforms necessary to steer the district into the new millenium.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study will focus on Chapter 2: Review of the Literature, Chapter 3: Design of the Study, Chapter 4: Presentation of the Research Findings, and Chapter 5: conclusions, Implications and Further Study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The science department at Pennsauken High School is composed of three teachers with more than twenty years of experience, two teachers with 8 years of experience and eleven teachers with less than five years of experience. In the past five years, an average of three teachers a year or 19% per year have left the department according to the personnel register of the school district. One teacher with four years of experience has just tendered his resignation citing job dissatisfaction as the reason for his departure. Two other teachers have acknowledged to the intern that they are seriously looking for a new career due to the amazing amount of effort it takes to be a teacher.

Stephen Gordon (1991) has computed that despite the good intentions of beginning teachers, 40 to 50 percent of them will drop out of teaching within their first seven years and that most of these will occur within their first two years. This statistic is realized in Pennsauken High School. Gordon (1991) gives five environmental factors that confront novice teachers. The first is that new teachers usually get the toughest work assignments. This is true of Pennsauken High School. New teachers typically are placed in the general courses and in the STAR program that is for students who are at-risk of failing or dropping out of school. The second environmental factor is unclear expectations that include traditions, informal routines, and customs that make up the culture of the school. This is also true of Pennsauken High School. There are a plethora of traditions and routines that new teachers are exposed to from the filling out of personal day requests to whom makes the coffee. Teachers need to know who to see about which

form and which secretary is in charge of what program. None of this information is found in any manual and it is simply tradition to be discovered. The third factor is the lack of resources available to the teacher. First-year teachers lack the stockpile of instructional materials, office supplies, and instructional techniques that experienced teachers have. This is certainly true in the Pennsauken School District. New teachers are not given their own classroom, but must move from room to room and live off of a cart. They do not have a desk or even a filing cabinet to call their own. They also are not given a chance to order materials since ordering is done the year before a school year. They have no idea what equipment the department has or where it is kept. The fourth factor is isolation. Beginning teachers view seeking help as an admission of incompetence according to Gordon (1991) and continually hide serious problems. This is also true in Pennsauken. Many of the new science teachers are hesitant to seek advice from their supervisor or department head. Some find confidants whom they will speak to, but others simply go out on their own and re-invent the wheel. The teacher who turned in his resignation this year gave his supervisor no indication that he was dissatisfied until he handed him the letter. The final factor is reality shock, which is realized when the teacher sees what his or her job actually entails. Several of the new teachers at Pennsauken High School have commented that they were unaware that the job was as stressful as it is. Many are relieved when vacation days come so that they can “catch up” on their grading and lesson planning.

To combat the large attrition rate in the high school, to seek to ease these environmental factors that cause new teachers to leave the profession, and to meet the NJ

Department of Education requirements that all first year teachers have mentors, the administration of Pennsauken High School has instituted a policy where new teachers are paired with veteran teachers called mentor teachers. Mentors are defined as veteran teachers serving as support providers (Halford 1998). These mentor teachers are given the task of helping the new teachers through the first year of their teaching experience. The program has seen limited success, since the numbers of teachers who leave the school has not decreased, but has actually increased in the science department in the last two years.

This result would be no surprise to Rowley (1999) who would explain that lack of mentor training is responsible for the null effect of the program. Mentors are given no training in Pennsauken High School. After being selected by the Assistant Principal this year in August, the mentors went through a short 30 minute in-service that concentrated mostly on which forms would be turned in at what time. No mention was made at the training about how to go about mentoring and no accommodations for time with the mentees was made. After the meeting, only two mentors even talked to their mentees. The rest left with their colleagues and left the mentees to wander around the halls.

Other theorists would explain that mentor teachers tend to be conservative, traditional teachers who do not model effective practice (Cochran-Smith 1991). This also tends to be true of Pennsauken High School. The two mentors assigned last year to the three new teachers all are considered by their supervisor to be traditional teachers who do not model effective practice. In these cases seniority determined who would be the mentor instead of effectiveness.

Another problem with the program is that every new teacher to the district is not given a mentor, but mentors are only assigned to first year teachers because only first year teachers are required to have mentors by the state. Teachers who have taught in other school districts are not given a mentor, but must fend for themselves. These teachers, although not new to teaching, are still new to the district and the culture and must contend with the same environmental factors described by Gordon (1991).

Another potential problem with the mentoring program at Pennsauken High School is that time is not allocated to the program. There is no arrangement made to give mentors common time with their mentees. Rowley (1999) believes that in order for the culture to believe that mentoring is important, programs must provide mentors with stipends and release time from duties. Halford (1998) says, "Policymakers need to recognize that support providers need time to work with beginning teachers. Not allowing adequate time can doom a program. (P.4)"

Mentor selection is also a problem that must be dealt with. Rowley (1999) describes six essential characteristics of a good mentor. The first of these is a person who is committed to the role of mentoring. This type of person would be discovered according to Rowley only in a formal mentor-training course. They would be the type of person who would be willing to undergo such a course. They would be willing to keep logs and journals relating to their experience. The second of these characteristics is for mentors to be empathetic. They must be able to empathize with the new teacher's situation. This can be cultivated according to Rowley by reading stories about new teachers during formal mentor training sessions. The third characteristic is the need to be

good instructional support leaders. This can only be accomplished by shared experiences according to Rowley. The teachers must watch each other teach and discuss what they observe. The fourth characteristic is that a good mentor is a continuous learner. They are attending workshops and taking graduate courses. They are constantly trying to improve their craft. The fifth characteristic is that good mentors approach each new teacher without a cookie cutter approach to development. They recognize that each person is different and needs different types of help and encouragement. The last characteristic is a positive attitude. Good mentors are positive. They communicate hope and optimism.

Besides not having a formal mentor training program, Pennsauken also picks mentors based not on these types of characteristics but by mostly by seniority. The supervisors and department heads that work with the teachers in their departments on a daily basis are given no input on the selection of the mentors. Since it is a paid position it is done according to seniority according to the Assistant Principal who acknowledges the fact that seniority does not necessarily mean good teaching.

An improved mentor program at Pennsauken High School would have other benefits according to Wasley (1999). By training experienced teachers to be mentors we are giving them a leadership role which may actually help keep them in the teaching profession. Bartunek (1990) gives another reason to train mentors. She believes that by mentoring a new teacher, the mentor actually must consciously think of the unconscious practices that make them a good teacher. By doing this, they begin to reexamine their own teaching practice which can lead to better teaching on their parts. This was demonstrated last year at Pennsauken High School when an experienced teacher observed

a PowerPoint project that was being done by a new teacher. He asked her to help him do the same type of project with his classes and she agreed to help.

There is a need to redefine the mentoring program in Pennsauken High School. The first step must be to define exactly what should be included in a mentor training course or more specifically what types of things do new teachers need to know? Once this information is discovered then a training course can be developed to teach mentors to provide this type of information to new teachers. Pennsauken must first discover what types of support the new teacher is in need of and then design a program to meet those needs. To this end this research was initiated.

Chapter 3

Sample

In an effort to try to gain some insight into what areas new teachers needed the most help in, a sample of new science teachers from Pennsauken High School were studied. This sample included every 1st year teacher, every 2nd year teacher, and every 4th year teacher. There was no inclusion of a third year teacher because there is only one 3rd year teacher in the science department and he was excluded because of the severe problems that he is encountering which has placed him outside the influence of the intern. There were three 1st year teachers in the department, all of which have similar backgrounds. All three of these teachers graduated from a teacher education program and all three of them have had a limited experience in education in another school. There were three 2nd year teachers. Two of these teachers are alternate route candidates and the third is a product of a teacher education program. Both alternate route candidates are from the health care industry where they were employed for more than 5 years. All three of the 2nd year teachers had no prior experience in education before coming to Pennsauken High School. There are three 4th year teachers in the study. The administrators in the building have identified all three of these teachers as being very proficient and they served as the control group for the study. This sample was chosen because it was of manageable size and included every new teacher in the science department who could be studied.

Description of the Research Design

The study was conducted using an action research design. Each question that surfaced during the problem formulation phase of the research was listed on a table (see Table 3.1 below). For each of the three questions, three data collection techniques were employed. The first research question involved the training that new teachers need in classroom management techniques. The three sources of data for this question were interviews with new teachers, a study of the evaluations of new teachers, and a study of the referrals sent to the office by new teachers to see what types of infractions they refer to the assistant principals. The second question studied was the training that new teachers need in lesson planning and instructional strategies. The three sources of data for this question included an archive box where teachers place all of their assignments for one week, a study of the teachers' lesson plans, and a study of the evaluations of the new teachers to see if their evaluators feel that they are planning their lessons well and using appropriate instructional strategies. The third question that the study tried to answer about mentoring new science teachers involved what safety training they needed in order to conduct safe laboratory experiments. The three sources of data used to answer this question included an on-line safety quiz developed for laboratory workers,df observations of laboratory periods to see if safety procedures were being enforced, and "snapshots" of laboratory procedures which were conducted on regular intervals by stopping by each laboratory period for only a few minutes a quickly surveying each room for safety infractions.

Table 3.1: Research Questions and Their Data Sources.

| <i>Research Questions</i> | <i>Data Source #1</i> | <i>Data Source #2</i> | <i>Data Source #3</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What training do new teachers need in classroom management techniques? | Interview 1 st , 2 nd and 4 th year secondary science teachers to see what training they felt they could have used or benefited from. | Study evaluations of new teachers to determine if they have classroom management plans that are working. | Archival evidence of disciplinary infractions in the new teachers classrooms including white cards |
| What training do new teachers need in lesson planning and instructional strategies? | Archive box. New teachers put all of their assignments into the box for one week. Then we go through them together. | Look through the lesson plans the 1 st year teachers to ascertain if they are adequately writing up their lessons. | Evaluations of new teachers to determine if they are adequately planning their lessons and what help they need if any. |
| What training do new teachers need in safety? | Give new teachers an on-line safety quiz and study their results. (See website: http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/hhmi/public/) | Observations of new teachers during lab periods to see if they are enforcing safety protocols. | “Snapshots” of laboratory procedures. (Poking my head into each lab room every 30 minutes for a week to get a quick look at the safety practices) |

Descriptions of Research Instruments

- **Interview questions for 1st, 2nd and 4th year secondary Science teachers** on the topic of classroom management. Teachers were interviewed in a group by their experience. Three groups interviewed were: 1st year teachers, 2nd year science teachers, and 4th year science teachers. The interview questions are listed below.

1. How effective was your classroom management plan in your 1st year of teaching?
2. What components aided in its effectiveness?
3. What components was it lacking?
4. What advice on classroom management would you have for the first year teacher?
5. What do you know now that you wish you had known then?
6. What issues do you still struggle with?

- **Evaluation study:**

Teacher evaluations have a checklist portion that can be marked Proficient (P), Needs Improvement (N) and Unsatisfactory (U). Observations of new teachers for the past 5 years were studied to see if observers have believed that classroom management has been a problem for new teachers. The numbers of P's, N's and U's will be counted and tallied.

- **Archival Evidence – “White Cards” (Disciplinary Referrals to the office)**

The “white cards” of each new teacher were counted and tallied according to type of infraction. This evidence will be analyzed for clues as to how teachers’ management techniques could curtail the behavior before a write-up was necessary.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Disobedience/Insubordination | |
| Language | |
| <u>Disruption of Class</u> | |
| Late to class | |
| Cutting class | |
| Cutting detention | |
| Possession of illegal objects (hats, beepers, cell phones, gum, food) | |
| Fighting/Assault | |
| Other | |

▪ **Archive box**

Teachers put all of their papers, assignments, notes, etc. in a box representing a student. Everything a student would get was placed in the box. After one week, the contents of the box were studied and tallied using the checklist below.

| Strategy | # of Occurrences | Approximate time allotted |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Xeroxed Notes, lecture notes | | |
| Labs | | |
| Readings (textbooks, newspapers, etc.) | | |
| Puzzles, games, etc. | | |
| Problems, Questions, Worksheets, etc. | | |
| Group work, Cooperative Learning, etc. (not a lab) | | |
| Quizzes, Tests, etc. | | |
| Assessments besides quizzes and tests | | |
| Question and Answer sessions (Socratic) | | |
| Summarizers like note to a friend, ticket to leave, etc. | | |
| Videos, Filmstrips (God Forbid), Laserdiscs, DVDs | | |
| Guest speakers | | |
| Student presentations | | |
| Debates | | |
| Going over homework | | |
| Going over Labs | | |
| Going over tests/assessments | | |
| Going over worksheets | | |
| Writing essays/ stories/ (other than conclusions on lab reports and answers to ditto questions) | | |

- **Lesson plan check**

Observed = X

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Topic is taught in accordance with timeline | |
| Objective is observable | |
| Objective is appropriate | |
| Lesson plans are on time | |
| Lesson plans are neat | |
| Methods are spelled out | |
| Methods are varied | |
| Attention span is accounted for (at least 3 change-ups for 16 min attention span per period) | |
| Teacher assesses each student in the room to see if they met objective each period | |
| Meaningful homework is given | |

- **Evaluation study 2 (lesson planning):**

Teacher evaluations have a checklist portion that can be marked Proficient (P), Needs Improvement (N) and Unsatisfactory (U). Observations of new teachers for the past 5 years were studied to see if observers have believed that lesson planning/instructional strategies/instructional process have been a problem for new teachers. The numbers of P's, N's and U's from the lesson planning/instructional strategy section of the instrument were counted and tallied.

- **On-line Safety Test for new teachers**

Knowing How to Practice Safe Science by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute is a free on-line safety course and quiz designed to help identify whether or not laboratory workers are proficient in laboratory safety procedures. It reported a percentage of correct responses that were evaluated. A score above 80% was considered passing.

(<http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/hhmi/public/>)

- **Observations of New Teachers during labs**

The intern will sit through each new teacher's lab period on two different occasions. Using the Safety manuals' list of safe practices for teachers, the intern will make marks next to items which are not safe.

- **Snapshots**

The intern visited new teachers during their lab period for an unannounced 5-minute safety check. The intern used the safety manuals' list of safe practices for teachers to quickly evaluate each new teacher in the midst of a lab without notice. This was done to each new teacher on 10 separate dates picked randomly and purposefully to avoid school events. In an effort to get the most "normal" of circumstances.

Data Analysis Plan

The intern employed a team of two science teachers to help him assess the data. These teachers were teachers who are experienced "master teachers" and are considered likely mentor candidates. Their involvement in the practice did not only help prevent experimenter bias, but it also will help pave the way for them to become mentors. The group met over a period of several days to identify themes in the data. This was accomplished by the group sitting together and having one person read the data. The group will use intuition to mentally sift through the data looking for patterns. When a pattern or theme was identified it was placed on the top of a column in a matrix like Table 3.2. When all of the data had been sifted through and the themes were identified, the group used the matrix to interrogate the data. This was done by listing the data sources in the row headings and listing quotes from interviews or tallied percentages in the columns as evidence for the theme. New themes were added during this process and

themes discovered in the first culling of the data were deleted. After the evidence was placed on the matrix, it will was color coded for each theme and placed in the appropriate pile. After all of the evidence is examined, the data for each color-coded theme was compiled and typed in a single document to be studied.

Table 3.2: Data Sifting Matrix

| THEME-> | Theme #1 | Theme #2 | Theme #3 | Theme #4 |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | | | |
| <i>Question #1</i> | | | | |
| Interviews | | | | |
| Evaluations | | | | |
| Referrals | | | | |
| | | | | |
| <i>Question #2</i> | | | | |
| Archive Box | | | | |
| Lesson Plans | | | | |
| Evaluations | | | | |
| | | | | |
| <i>Question #3</i> | | | | |
| Safety Quiz | | | | |
| Observations | | | | |
| Snapshots | | | | |

Quotes and Statistics that correspond to the data collection method are placed under each identified theme. Then the data is color-coded.

Chapter 4

The following information was found using the methodology described in Chapter 3. Three educators participated in the sifting of data collected from the data sources. The information was placed on a table which will be summarized in this chapter.

Research Question #1: What training do new teachers need in classroom management techniques?

First, second and 4th year teachers were interviewed by Ms. Tracey Wojdon and Mr. Peter Woodcock in a group session on February 16, 2001 during a district inservice run by the intern. Ms. Wojdon, Mr. Woodcock and the intern asked the sample group to answer several questions in small groups. Several of the questions posed dealt with new teacher training. The new teachers mentioned that they felt that there was not adequate training for new teachers. They mentioned that the three day summer New Teacher Workshop held by the district was too rushed. They also mentioned that the summer workshop concentrated on areas which they had just received training on in college and did little to prepare them for the uniqueness of the district. They stated that the computer training that they received at the new teacher workshop was good, but that it was rushed and PowerPoint was emphasized too much. One half of a day was spent training the teachers in classroom management techniques during the three day New Teacher Workshop. The high school teachers commented that the training was oriented too much

to the elementary teachers and that it helped them very little in their classrooms. The teachers noted that the 20 minutes they had with the vice-principals did little to help them except to let them know what form to fill out if someone misbehaved. They made mention that the discipline code was not explicit enough and not followed by most people in the school. They commented that the students rarely follow the dress code, don't wear their ID badges, and that many students arrive to class late. They said that the administrators do little to help change these conditions and may even exacerbate the problem by sending students who break the rules back to class with a note to let them slide. Most of the teachers commented that their mentors had been of little help to them in this area or in any other area. They said they wished they could see more teachers in action. Most of the teachers commented that their classroom management plans were based on a teacher that they had either had at some point or on their cooperating teacher from student teaching.

A study was made of new teacher evaluations done in the last 5 years. Forty evaluations from the nine new teachers were studied. In seventeen of the forty evaluations or 43% of the time, teachers were marked as in need of improvement or unsatisfactory in the area of discipline. Of the nine teachers studied, only two never were marked off for classroom management while a non-tenured teacher.

A study was made of the discipline referrals made during the 1999-2000 school year by the new teachers. An average of 93.7 referrals were made by new teachers

during that school year. The lowest amount of referrals made by new teachers was 17 and the highest amount was 207 referrals. 35% of the referrals were for disrupting class in some way, 22% of the referrals were for disrespect to a teacher, 21% of the referrals were for missing a detention, 16% of the referrals were for lateness to class, and the other 6% were for offenses ranging from not bringing a pencil to class to knife fighting. On the referral the teacher marks prior action taken before making the referral. 64.2% of the time new teachers marked that they had given a detention to a student prior to referring them to the office. 31% of the time the new teachers marked that they had called the parents about the situation prior to sending the student to the office.

The data from research question #1 suggests that new teachers are in need of training in the area of classroom management. This training is given by the school district during a three-day period in the summer before the teachers begin teaching, but the teachers believe that it is not effective and that it concentrates too much on elementary types of classroom management skills. A course on classroom management over the course of the school year, possibly during in-services, led by the assistant principals at the school would better prepare the teachers for what they are facing. It would also ease the tensions that the new teachers feel toward the administrators due to the perceived lack of support. It may also be necessary for the assistant principals to look at the dress code and other rules and eliminate those which are not enforced which could also ease some of the tensions.

Research Question #2: What training do new teachers need in lesson planning and instructional strategies?

An archive box was placed in each of the new teachers' classrooms for a period of one week. The teachers were instructed to place one copy of everything they gave their students in one of their classes into the box for that week as if the box were a new student in class. After the week the contents of the boxes were examined. The average number of dittos that each student received for the week was 2 per day. The maximum amount of dittos that a student received in one period was 6 and the lowest amount was zero.

Lecture notes accounted for 78% of the contents of each box and averaged 3 pages of normal sized handwriting. Labs accounted for 11% of the box and tests/quizzes accounted for 7% of the contents. The remaining 4% was composed mainly of newspaper articles.

The new teacher's lesson plans were checked from September to January. Eight of the nine new teachers were on track with the established timeline for the course. Six of the nine new teachers wrote objectives that were observable. 20% of the new teachers had turned in their lesson plans late on three or more occasions in the 5 month span. Three of the new teachers had turned their lesson plans in late for four or more weeks in a row. All of the new teachers' lesson plans were neat. 77% of the new teachers did not fully explain what their methodology would be for their lesson. 67% of the teachers wrote page numbers or one word explanations for methodology. Only two of the nine teachers ever wrote more than one methodology for a lesson. From the lesson plans, the

teachers were using only one instructional method per class and that was predominately lecture. Teachers usually marked question and answer for their assessment. The teachers usually listed a homework assignment in their plans which was usually tied to the textbook in someway.

New teacher evaluations showed that in 27 of the 40 evaluations, new teachers were marked in need of improvement or unsatisfactory in the area of instructional process. All nine of the new teachers had been marked off in at least one of their evaluations. Three of the nine teachers had been marked off in all of their evaluations as a new teacher. The absence of an appropriate summary was the most missed point by new teachers. The lack of pacing was the second on the list of missed points.

The data gathered from research question #2 suggests that even though 78% of the new teachers graduated from a teacher preparation program, they do not know how to structure their lessons properly. The three-day training given over the summer which the new teachers believe to be ineffective did concentrate on lesson planning, but to no apparent effect. It may be necessary to offer a second course in lesson planning to the new teachers during their second year in the district. The delay would give them some experience in what works and doesn't work to fall back on while they are taking the course and give them time to firm up their discipline by taking the first course.

Research Question #3: What training do new teachers need in safety?

The new teachers participated in an on-line safety quiz at the first in-service of the school year along with the veteran teachers. This was part of a safety-training course developed by the intern for the district. The teachers received an average score of 85.3% from the Yale site. The passing grade according to Yale was an 80%. The lowest score on the test was a 47%. Two of the students received 100%.

Each new teacher was visited for a whole period during a laboratory period. The intern used the department's safety manual as a checklist to determine if proper safety precautions had been followed. Each of the nine new teachers was marked off for a safety violation on every inspection made by the intern. These violations included failing to wear safety spectacles by students, failure to disinfect safety spectacles in between classes, blocking a fire shower and/or fire blanket, unlabeled chemicals, untidy workspaces, and other unsafe practices.

Five minute safety checks were run for a period of two months at the high school as a routine part of the intern's duties. 87% of the time a safety hazard was noted during one of these quick inspections. The two offenses that were reported most often were the lack of appropriate eyewear worn and the blockage of a safety device like a shower, eyewash or a fire blanket.

The data from research question #3 shows that even though the teachers are very well aware of the safety precautions necessary in the lab as evidenced by their glowing scores on a rather hard test, they are not able or willing to enforce the procedures in their rooms even when an observer is present. The teachers' lack of classroom management

skills may play into this a little. Since the teachers can't control the students, they can't make them wear goggles. However, mostly it seems to be an issue in staff discipline. If the teachers fail to enforce the rules, they need to be reminded with a letter from their supervisor starting half way during year one for each occurrence. A preponderance of letters should certainly play into tenure discussions.

The three research questions seem to point towards a need for increased teacher education programs targeted to the new teachers. In year one, it seems a course in classroom management is needed. In year two, a course in lesson planning and deliverance needs to be instituted. New teachers also need to be held accountable for the rules that have been set especially in the area of safety so they do not cultivate bad habits.

Chapter 5

The science department at Pennsauken High School is representative of the problems that are found in urban school districts around the country. Good teachers are needed in districts that serve poor, minority students but they are hard to find and harder to keep (Ascher 1991).

Pennsauken provides a three-day summer workshop for its new teachers that gives them a crash course in classroom management, procedures, and computer literacy. The new teachers report that the information is crammed into a short amount of time and that the computer courses are not required. No specific training is given to the new teacher after this three-day course. New teachers are lacking basic classroom management skills according to the data gathered and yet no classroom management techniques are taught to them after this initial workshop. New teachers are lacking the ability to construct a simple lesson effectively according to the data gathered, yet there is no program offered to offset this either.

New teachers are given a mentor for one year only if it is their first year of teaching. This is only done to meet the state requirements. Mentors are usually selected by seniority since it is a paid position for the mentor. Mentors receive no training and are not required to do anything at all for the new teachers. There is no program in place to assist either party carry out their function.

This study shows that the Pennsauken Board of Education is providing training to its new teachers, but that the training is ineffective and not encompassing enough.

Pennsauken Public Schools need to reevaluate their inservice offerings for new teachers to include new courses which must be attended by every new teacher which concentrate on classroom management and effective teaching strategies.

A mentoring program must also be established to identify, train and support mentors so that they can serve new teachers. These mentors must be trained in the same classroom management techniques and instructional strategies as the new teachers so that they can support these courses with the new teachers.

Administrators must also be trained in these techniques so that they can support the efforts of the mentor and new teacher.

The main conclusion of this study is the need for a vision in regards to staff development in the Pennsauken Public Schools. Since the district has no plan whatsoever for staff development, it may be wise for them to seek out a college or a program that specializes in developing these types of programs. Further study is needed into the possibility of becoming a professional development school or developing a partnership in a similar program.

It is apparent to the intern that vision is needed in the Pennsauken Public Schools and as a result of this study and of the internship, he is convinced that he needs to help bring this vision about. Leadership is needed in place of the tradition that exists in the school district. The administration needs to become proactive instead of reactive.

As a result of this study, the science department at Pennsauken High School has instituted a buddy system for all of its new teachers. New teachers are given a buddy teacher for the first three years of their tenure in Pennsauken. Buddy teachers are

volunteers who undergo after school training on a regular basis. The buddy teacher is given a plan to follow as a guide which includes suggested observation procedures and timelines, topics of conversation, and suggested meeting times.

This year the Pennsauken District held its first mentor training over three inservices during the school year. Mentor teachers were identified and trained in basic techniques including peer observation, empathy, and classroom management. This training will continue during the summer and next year. The district also held its first new teacher inservices. During three inservices new teachers from each level met to discuss the challenges that they were facing in their classroom and were given instruction in management skills and instructional strategies.

References

Ascher, C. (1991). Retaining good teachers in urban schools. (ERIC/CUE digest, number 77). New York, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED341762)

Bartunek, H. M. (1990). The classroom teacher as teacher educator. (Eric Digest 89-7). Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED335297)

Cochran-Smith, M. (1991). Learning to teach against the grain. Harvard Educational Review, 61(3), 279-310.

Gordon, S. P. (1991). How to help beginning teachers succeed. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Halford, J. M. (1998). Easing the way for new teachers. Educational Leadership, 55(5), 33-36.

Rowley J. B. (1999). The good mentor. Educational Leadership, 56(8), 20-22.

Wasley, P. (1999). Teaching worth celebrating. Educational Leadership, 56(8), 8-13.

Biographical Data

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name | Keith B. Patterson |
| High School | Salesianum School For Boys Wilmington, DE |
| Undergraduate | Bachelor of Arts Secondary Education Clemson University Clemson, SC |
| Graduate | Masters in the Art of Teaching Marygrove College Detroit, MI Master of Arts Educational Leadership Rowan University Glassboro, NJ |
| Present Occupation | K-12 District Science Supervisor Pennsauken Public Schools Pennsauken, NJ |